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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the usefulness of adopting innovative, student-centered instructional techniques in two traditional but very different cultures, Turkey and Puerto Rico. In each country, the study occurred in a program to train teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL). Using a student-centered approach, trainees learned how to prepare and present a classroom lesson and related test, then provide peer tutoring. Trainees wrote quiz and test items to assess their classmates' comprehension of this material, which were used alongside the teacher's test items. Results from three groups (two groups of ESL teacher trainees, one in each country, and one comparison group of ESL students who were taught using student-centered techniques) were evaluated. Student opinions were also elicited with a questionnaire. Results were mixed, suggesting that student receptiveness to innovative approaches is culturally conditioned. Further research is recommended before new teaching and testing methods, even those found to be effective and successful in other contexts, are implemented. (MSE)

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ED 362 060

Title of Paper: "Students Writing Their Own Tests-- An Experiment in Student-Centered Assessment in Two Cultures"

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Charles Churchill, the 18th Century English poet, wrote: "By different methods different men excel: But where is he who can do all things well?" As specialists in language arts, we know all too well that no one method or approach to language learning is right for everyone. When I left for a Fulbright lectureship at a university in Turkey about 2 1/2 years ago, I was intent on discovering whether some of our Western-style teaching methods were exportable to that area of the world. I had just read a 1989 article by Barbara Burnaby and Yilin Sun in TESOL Quarterly where the authors warned against exporting "Western" methodologies to China, claiming that Chinese "favor teacher-centered methods and structured curricula" and that "non-traditional methods are seen as games rather than serious learning" (Burnaby and Sun, 1989:229). I was curious: Would I find a similar situation in Turkey?

So, this combined teaching and testing experiment which I'm going to describe started at a Master's Degree program in Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Ankara, Turkey. The second and the major part of the experiment was completed during the past year at the University of Puerto Rico. The two societies--Turkey and Puerto Rico--are so vastly different in culture that I figured that teaching in both places afforded me a unique opportunity to observe how different cultures adapt to different approaches to language teaching and testing. I figured if it worked in Puerto Rico, it probably won't work in Turkey, and vice versa. I went to Turkey intent on implementing some Western-style teaching and testing innovations related to student-centered instruction and autonomous learning. For years in Puerto Rico I've wanted to pull myself out of this teacher-fronted classroom format that we're all familiar with and try out a student-centered approach that would encourage students to take charge of their own learning.

First, an overview on what "student-centered" learning means and how it has been used in the second language learning literature. In recent years there has been a movement away from "a highly structured, teacher-centered, grammar-based teaching in favor of task-oriented, communicatively-based learner-centered teaching" (Taylor, 1983). This movement has implied some significant changes in the roles of teacher and student in terms of teaching, testing, and the selection of materials. Generally, adopting a "student-centered" approach involves considering the students' feelings and getting them more involved in managing their own learning or, in other words, making passive students into active, autonomous learners. Advocates of student-centered education have proposed that our present teacher-fronted instruction format be modified to one that is small-group, student-centered on the grounds that learners will benefit from a

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greater degree of involvement in classroom activity if they work together in small groups. A student-centered class can involve the students at all stages of instruction and assessment. For example, some advocates of student-centered learning propose that the course syllabus be negotiated by the students and the teacher together (Nunan and Breen, 1989), that students select their own instructional materials, and that students participate in their own assessment.

Recently the literature has encouraged teachers to become sensitive to the contributions that learners can make to curriculum design. For example, Nunan and Breen (1989) place emphasis on what they call the "hidden agenda" of learners and suggest ways in which teachers can ascertain and address student agendas. They point out that there is often a discrepancy between what is planned, what is taught, and what is learned. In addition, a 1989 article in ELT Journal by David Clark recommends that students be "productively engaged in the adaptation and construction of materials..." (p. 136). Clark suggests that the learners internalize the materials through their own creative involvement, and that they develop the role of "collaborator" rather than "language receiver." In addition, in writing their own exercises and tests, they engage in a meaningful problem-solving task. Of course, Clark recommends that students first go through a training period when they learn how to write these materials. A student test-writing experiment in Dublin, Ireland, was also reported by Smith (1990) where students decided on the content of material to be discussed and tested and contributed items to the test, and a similar design was used by Papadaki (1991) in Greece. In addition, I was inspired to pursue this line of research by my Fulbright colleague Jim Stalker of Michigan State, who conducted similar experiments in student-made tests at the MA-TEFL program in Turkey.

The experiment I am about to describe allows for a sharing of the traditional control that teachers have had over the content of the curriculum, materials, and tests, and encourages students, as stakeholders, to take the initiative by making an input in these areas. It utilizes a small-group, task-based strategy which progresses step by step from materials preparation to teaching to testing to peer correction.

In order to test this approach in different settings, I took a variety of different English classes ranging from Basic English to English teacher training courses in applied linguistics and teaching methodology. In each of these classes, my procedure was similar, as you can observe in Figure 1. Task 1 was given to a Basic English class in Puerto Rico. In this task students divided into small groups with each group assigned a section of their textbook chapter. They were to discuss among themselves a specific grammar point, prepare a lesson on that point to give to the class, and, at the same time, prepare test items on this grammar point. Task 2 was assigned to English teacher trainees taking a class in Spanish-English contrastive analysis in Puerto Rico. As in the other task, this one divides the class into

small groups and assigns the responsibility of presenting sections of a textbook unit on stress and intonation patterns. A small-group task comparable to the latter one was given to a language acquisition class at the MA level in Turkey.

In this approach there are five principal steps or phases: lesson preparation, test preparation, lesson presentation, test administration, and peer tutoring. First came lesson preparation. Here students, working in groups of three or four, were given their first instructions--this was to teach one portion of the textbook unit to other students in the class. Thus, the first part of the groups' task was to prepare a class on part of the unit to present before the whole class. In some cases, depending on the nature of the class, teaching the unit also meant conducting practice or drill on specific skills; this was true in both Tasks 1 and 2. In the case of a grammar lesson, for instance (Task 1), students assuming the role of teacher either used the grammar exercises in the textbook to practice with the class or prepared their own materials. After the group members had prepared the lesson, they wrote quiz or test items to assess their classmates' comprehension of the material. This is the "test preparation phase." During this preparation period, the teacher circulated around the classroom, giving suggestions on how to teach the lessons and also pointers on writing test items. As co-collaborator, my job was to make suggestions while students were preparing their presentations and test questions. Then, I scheduled the group presentations and collected the student-made test items.

Then came the "Lesson Presentation" phase when student groups presented their part of the unit to the class. Students listening to the group presentations were encouraged to take notes since they knew they would be tested on the material at the next class. In fact, students were told that they would be quizzed or tested on the material and that some of the items their classmates had written would appear on the test together with items written by the teacher. The items were then incorporated into either short quizzes for checking comprehension of the material or used in unit exams. In general, in any quiz or unit exam the ratio of teacher-made to student made items was 50-50. Next, in the "Test Administration" phase, the students took the test and within days it was corrected and returned to them.

Then came the peer-tutoring phase when the tests were returned to the students with grades. Now, as teachers, we're all familiar with our students' reaction to returning graded exam papers. Students have a tendency to look at the graded exam paper as something that is fait accompli; that is, they are so concerned with their grade that they rarely bother to correct their mistakes. So, I decided to extend the student-centered approach into this phase as well. All students were asked to correct their mistakes on the exam with the added incentive that, if they did so, extra points would be added to their grades. And in making their corrections or modifications in their exam

papers, students were asked to seek the help or advice on these weak areas from their classmates who had prepared that part of the test. Thus, the student test writers became the "experts" who provided peer tutoring for their classmates who needed to correct their papers. One instrument which can be used in this phase is a self-evaluation sheet. Here students can view the different criteria evaluated in the test and can check off those areas they have mastered and note those areas of weakness. You can have the students save these sheets to use as guides for studying for the final exam. So the step by step procedure involved preparing a lesson, writing test items, presenting the lesson, taking a combined student and teacher-made test, and finally, correcting the test using their test-writing classmates as a tutoring resource.

Figure 1

Steps in Student-Centered Learning and Testing

Lesson Preparation
Students, working in groups of three or four, prepare a lesson on a portion of the textbook unit to teach to the whole class.

Test Preparation
In the same groups students write quiz or test items to assess the students' comprehension of the material they are going to present. (During this phase, students are instructed on the mechanics of writing good test items).

Lesson Presentation
Groups of student teachers present their part of the unit to the class while other students take notes and prepare to be tested on the material.

Test Administration
Students take a test consisting of teacher and student-made items (about 50-50%).

Peer Tutoring
Graded tests are returned to students who make corrections on incorrect items after consulting with classmates who wrote these items.

As I mentioned, I used this approach with a variety of classes. But, for the purpose of analyzing my data on student attitudes, three student populations or class types were identified. Two of these populations consisted of English teacher trainees--one at the MA level in Turkey, and the other was at the BA level in Puerto Rico. The third group was composed of intermediate-level EFL students from Basic English classes at the University of Puerto Rico. Thus, the first group consisted of proficient Spanish-English bilinguals, the second of

proficient Turkish-English bilinguals, and the third was composed of Spanish-dominant EFL learners. In addition to assessing student attitudes among the three types of classes, I was also interested in studying the effect of two different cultures (Turkish and Hispanic) as well as two levels of proficiency (intermediate and advanced) on these attitudes.

Thus, my research questions depended on how I grouped my subjects--either by nationality, by class type, or by language proficiency level. These research questions are stated in Figure 2. First, did participating students perceive these student-centered learning classes to be more beneficial than traditional teacher-fronted ones? Second, I wanted to look at the cultural factor: Are students from one culture (namely, Puerto Ricans) more accepting of student-centered innovations in teaching and testing than students of another culture (the Turkish students)? Third, I wanted to look at the type of class where this approach worked best, and, as I mentioned, I identified three different classes--Spanish-English bilingual teacher trainees at the BA level, Turkish-English bilingual teacher trainees at the MA level, and Spanish-dominant students of Basic English. So my question was: In which type of class were students more positive to this approach? Fourth, I wanted to look at proficiency level; so I asked the question: Are bilinguals more positive to this approach than less proficient English speakers. And finally, I wanted to see how students perform in student-made exam items as opposed to teacher-made ones because the common assumption is that students will perform better if they take exam items that they themselves or their classmates write than if they take items written by the teacher. Thus, my question was: Do students perform better on student-made test items than on teacher-made ones?

Figure 2
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1-Do students perceive student-centered classes to be more beneficial than traditional teacher-fronted classes?

2-Are Puerto Rican students more accepting of student-centered innovations in teaching and testing than Turkish students?

3-In which type of class were students were positive to this approach? (Class types were: a)Spanish-English bilingual teacher trainees at the BA level, b)Turkish-English bilingual teacher trainees at the MA level, and c)Spanish-dominant students of Basic English.

4-Are bilinguals more positive to this approach than less proficient learners?

5-Do students perform better on student-made test items than on teacher-made ones?

First, let's look at question one relating to attitudes of Puerto Rican versus Turkish students. If you look at the instrument I used to measure student attitudes, which is on page 2 of your handout, you will see the 10 questions I asked the students. For example, in item 1 I wanted to know if writing their own tests resulted in students' comprehending the material better than in teacher-made exams. In item 2 I wanted to know if students felt that they retained the material better in their memories. In item 3 I was looking at the effect of the strategy on test apprehension. In item 4 I asked students if they had studied less for this type of test than for teacher-made tests. And in item 5 I wanted to know if students had learned something about test writing in the process. In item 6 I asked whether the test writing activities were an efficient use of class time. In item 7, I asked whether they should be used for mid-terms and final exams, and in item 8 I asked whether they should be used in all kinds of tests, including quizzes. In Part Two, items 9 and 10, I wanted to gauge students' feelings about working in small groups versus learning in a teacher-fronted class. Since this instrument was close-ended and did not elicit sufficient commentaries, I later added an open-ended questionnaire where I asked similar questions but allowed students to comment freely.

The answer to the first research question--Do students perceive student-centered classes to be more beneficial than traditional teacher-fronted classes?--is indicated in the overall mean value in Table 1 of 3.16 where anything over 2.0 indicates a positive attitude towards these strategies. This is illustrated in in the bar graph in Figure 3. Here the mean values are listed to the right of each bar. Notice that students generally felt that the activities were a good use of class time, but they didn't feel that they studied less for these types of exams. Next, Table 2 shows how important the cultural factor was, which was my , second research question. As you can see in the table and also in Figure 4, Puerto Rican students were significantly more favorable to both working in small groups and writing their own exam items

Figure 3
Attitudes of Respondents
Towards Learner-Centered Teaching and
Testing Approaches

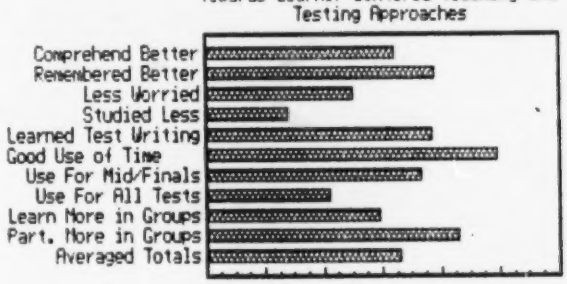
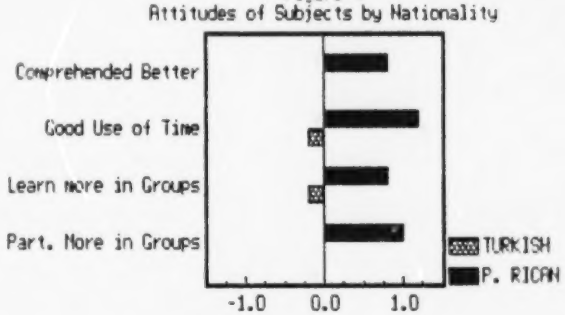


Figure 4
Attitudes of Subjects by Nationality



than were the Turkish students. In the graph in figure 4 the mean of 2.5 is neutral--neither negative nor positive. The horizontal bars to the right are positive and those to the left are negative. As you can see, Turkish students were neutral on two items (comprehended better and participated more in groups where the mean of 2.5 is written on the line and no bars are visible). They were negative on the other two items (good use of class time and learned more in groups). Thus, Puerto Rican students indicated a significantly higher level of agreement on items 1, 6, 9, and 10 in the questionnaire. That is, significantly more Puerto Ricans than Turks felt that they comprehended the material better (that's number 1 in the questionnaire), they thought the test-writing activities were an efficient use of class time (number 6 in the questionnaire), they learned more in small groups (item 9), and they participated more in these groups than they would in a teacher-fronted situation (item 10).

Table 1
Attitudes of Respondents
Towards Learner Centered Teaching and Testing Approaches

I#	Description	M	SD
1	Comprehended better	3.14	1.03
2	Remembered better	3.28	0.96
3	Less worried	3.00	1.09
4	Studied less	2.78	1.13
5	Learned test writing	3.27	0.99
6	Good use of class time	3.49	0.87
7	Use for mid/final exams	3.23	1.02
8	Use for all tests	2.92	1.11
9	Learned more in groups	3.09	1.06
10	Part. more in groups	3.36	0.93
Averaged Totals		3.16	1.02

N=83

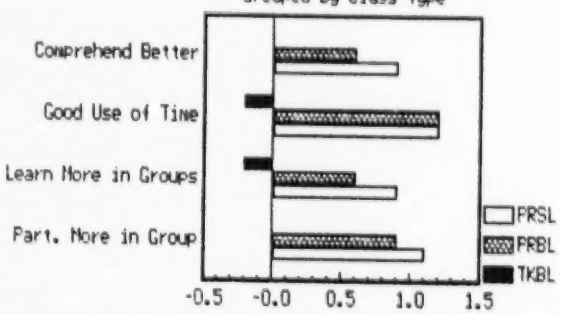
Table 2
T-Test Results and
Means and Standard Deviations of
Attitudes of Subjects Grouped by Nationality

I#	Description	Turkish M	Turkish S	Puerto Rican M	Puerto Rican SD	Entire Pop. t	Entire Pop. M	Entire Pop.
1	Comprehended better	2.5	1.1	3.3	.98	**2.92	3.1	1.04
6	Use of class time	2.3	1.0	3.7	.61	***5.38	3.5	0.87
9	Learned more in groups	2.3	1.2	3.3	.92	***3.63	3.1	1.05
10	Part. more in groups	2.5	1.2	3.5	.73	**3.03	3.3	0.92
Averaged Totals		2.4	1.1	3.5	.81	*4.34	3.3	0.97

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001 N=83

Next, I wanted to examine the three types of classes that I mentioned. One was an MA-level program for Turkish university professors who were Turkish-English bilinguals; the second was a BA-level program for Spanish-English bilinguals who were English teacher trainees; and the third consisted of three classes of intermediate-level Puerto Rican ESL students taking a required course in Basic English. Table 3 shows there were significant differences between the three groups on the same four questionnaire items. As you can see in the post-hoc Scheffé tests in Tables 4, 5, 6, and 7 and Figure 5, the differences were significant between the Turkish bilinguals and the Puerto Rican second language learners on Item 1 which referred to better comprehension using this approach. The Turks were neutral on this issue (so the bar is not visible) while the Puerto Rican ESL students showed a mean of 3.4 In the other three items, referring to good use of class time, learned more in small groups, and participated more in small groups, there were significant differences between the Turkish group and both of the Puerto Rican groups-the bilingual group and the second language group. The Turks felt that the activities were not a good use of class time and they did not learn more in small groups since both these items reflected negative attitudes; that is, the horizontal bars are in the opposite direction. Finally, in the last item the Turks were neutral about participating more in group work (so the bar is not visible) while both Puerto Rican groups were significantly more

Figure 5
Attitudes of Subjects
Grouped by Class Type



positive.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics and Results of One-Way ANOVAs for Attitudes of Subjects Grouped by Class Type

I#	Description	Group 1 TKBL M	SD	Group 2 PRBL M	SD	Group 3 PRSL M	SD	F Ratio
1	Comprehended better	2.5	1.1	3.1	0.9	3.4	1.0	5.3*
6	Good use of class time	2.3	1.0	3.7	0.4	3.7	0.7	25.5***
9	Learned more in groups	2.3	1.2	3.1	0.9	3.4	0.9	7.6***
10	Part. more in groups	2.5	1.2	3.4	0.7	3.6	0.7	9.1***

N=83 TKBL= Turkish Bilinguals; PRBL=Puerto Rican Bilinguals;
PRSL= Puerto Rican Second Language learners
*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table 4
Scheffe Test For Item 1
(Comprehend Better)
of Three Groups of Students

	T K B L	P R B L	P R S L
TKBL			
PRBL			
PRSL	*		

Table 5
Scheffe Test For Item 6
(Good Use of Class Time)
of Three Groups of Students

	T K B L	P R B L	P R S L
TKBL			
PRBL	*		
PRSL	*		

Table 6
Scheffe Test For Item 9
(Learned More in Groups)
of Three Groups of Students

	T K B L	P R B L	P R S L
TKBL			
PRBL	*		
PRSL	*		

Table 7
Scheffe Test For Item 10
(Participated More in Groups)
of Three Groups of Students

	T K B L	P R B L	P R S L
TKBL			
PRBL	*		
PRSL	*		

Next, I regrouped my subjects on two different language proficiency levels. The high proficiency level group consisted of the MA-level Turkish students and BA-level English teacher trainees in Puerto Rico and the low proficiency level group consisted of intermediate-level ESL students in Puerto Rico. As Table 8 shows, low proficiency level students were significantly more positive, not only on the four questionnaire items mentioned in the two other comparisons but also on item 2 (remembering the

material better) and item 3 (being less worried about the exam). Also, as you can see in Figure 6 grouping subjects in this way shows no negative attitudes by either group.

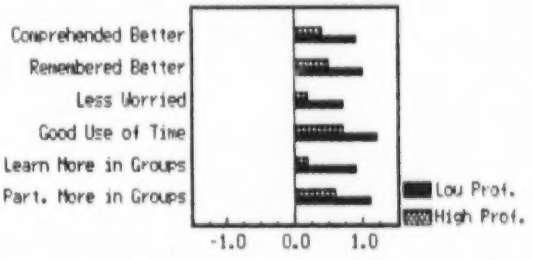
Table 8
Means and Standard Deviations and T-Test Results
for Attitudes of Subjects Grouped by Language Proficiency

I#	Description	High Prof. M	S	Low Prof. M	SD	t
1	Comprehended better	2.9	0.9	3.4	1.0	2.6*
2	Remembered better	3.0	0.9	3.5	1.0	2.4*
3	Less worried	2.7	1.1	3.2	1.0	2.3*
6	Good use of class time	3.2	1.0	3.7	0.7	2.6*
9	Learned more in groups	2.7	1.1	3.4	1.0	2.8**
10	Part. more in groups	3.1	1.1	3.6	0.7	2.6*

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001 N=83

Thus, looking at the three comparisons -- by nationality, by class type, and by proficiency level, it would seem that student attitudes towards this type of student-centered approach are a function not only of nationality, but also of a number of other factors including type of class and proficiency level. Second language students appear to be more positive to the approach than are bilingual teacher trainees, and perhaps a second language class which emphasizes language skills tends to lend itself better to this type of approach.

Figure 6
Attitudes of Subjects Grouped By Language Proficiency



Student comments on the open-ended questionnaire seemed to confirm the statistics described in these tables. However, this second instrument was used exclusively with the Puerto Rican subjects, as it was written after my return to Puerto Rico. The first question in this instrument was: "How much did you learn in your group? Did you find the experience beneficial?" Most of the ESL students pointed to the benefits of sharing knowledge with their classmates through this approach. One student said. "I learned a lot because in this way we know what our classmates are thinking. It was beneficial since we were able to exchange ideas and having to explain these ideas to others resulted in having clearer and more understandable ideas." While many of the bilingual students made similar commentaries, more bilinguals than ESL learners pointed to the need for more teacher input. For example, one Puerto Rican teacher trainee commented: "I learned what the other students taught, but at times it is necessary for the professor to explain more."

My second question was: "If you could choose between learning in small groups versus learning in a teacher-directed class, which would you choose?" Here the overwhelming majority of the second language students preferred group work. One comment was: "Through the group because we get more motivated, we put more effort into the work, and our mind is opened because we do the work ourselves." The bilingual students, on the other hand, either preferred a teacher-directed class or alternating between the two approaches. Said one: "I don't believe it is good to completely depend on a mentor. The strategy of working in groups should complement but not substitute the work of the teacher."

My third question was: "How did you find the experience of writing your own tests? Did you find it beneficial?" Here the response of both the bilinguals and ESL students was overwhelmingly favorable to this type of exercise. The only opposition came from a few bilinguals who were disappointed that the groups either didn't have time or weren't given the opportunity to share the test items they produced with each other. The bilinguals who favored the approach said it helped them to comprehend the material. "It was beneficial," said one bilingual, "because it helped us not just to memorize facts but to really understand the material." The second language students also mentioned this idea, but, in addition, most of them pointed out the advantage of having a clearer idea of what was expected of them. One student commented: "I liked it because you knew more or less what was coming in the exam," adding "many times professors put items in the exam that students don't understand." One second language student said the experience showed that the teacher recognized that students can make valuable input to the class, adding "I thought it was a good idea because the teacher was taking us into account and is recognizing that we can also express our own ideas."

My last question referred to the "peer correction" stage where students were asked to correct their exams after consulting the students from the groups which wrote the items. The question was: "When you corrected your exams, did your classmates help you to understand your errors?" Here again both groups were positive to this approach with the only dissention coming from a small number of bilingual students who had mixed feelings about it. An ESL student wrote: "Now that we see that we can learn by asking our friends, we don't have to depend so much on the professor." A bilingual student, however, stated: "My classmates helped me. But I didn't want to bother them too much because they also had difficulties and had to ask for help from other groups."

The commentaries from the two groups--bilingual and second language learners--would seem to indicate that the appropriateness of these activities depends on the task at hand and the proficiency level of the student. The bilingual students seemed to favor more teacher input, especially at the lesson preparation stage, while the second language students liked group

work because it gave them the opportunity to participate more in the class in a non-threatening way and helped to vary the class routine. Both groups, however, were positive to the idea of test writing, but for different reasons. The bilinguals thought it helped them to understand the material more thoroughly while the second language students liked it because it gave them the opportunity to know in advance what was coming on the test.

Now my last research question was: How do students perform in student-made exam items as opposed to teacher-made ones? To answer this question, I calculated the mean scores for both student-made and teacher-made items on six tests, two from each of the three class types.

As you can see in Table 9 and in Figure 7 the average scores for student-made test items exceeded those for teacher-made items on five of six tests chosen at random. You may also observe that it made little difference for the Puerto Rican second language students whether they took the student-made test items or the teacher-made ones while the difference was greater for the bilingual students. In some situations, such as the Turkish one, students reported that they shared the items they made before coming to take the test while in the Puerto Rican groups they apparently, for lack of time or other factors, didn't do this.

Figure 7
Mean Scores on
Student and Teacher-Made Exams

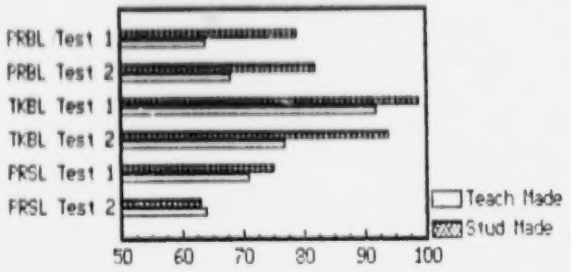


Table 9
Mean Scores on Items
of Teacher and Student-Made Exams

	S-Made	T-Made
Test 1 (PRBL)	79	64
Test 3 (PRBL)	82	68
Test 5 (TKBL)	99	92
Test 6 (TKBL)	94	77
Test 7 (PRSL)	75	71
Test 8 (PRSL)	63	64

The findings of the open-ended questionnaire seem to indicate that students come to the test with their own set of priorities as to what they think is important in the textbook and appreciate the opportunity to preview some of the test items. As teachers, we may have other ideas as to what is important and many times we misjudge the students' comprehension of a reading, a grammar lesson, or a class discussion. Giving students more

input into lesson and test preparation puts them in control of their own learning.

On the other hand, the results of the objective questionnaire show that student receptiveness towards innovations in teaching and testing are undeniably conditioned by culture, by task, and by language proficiency level. For the Turkish students, for example, changing the role of the teacher from that of "knower" to one of "co-collaborator" runs counter to the role they expect a teacher should perform. Many Turks also commented to me that they failed to see the point of writing their own test items and then taking them later on. Some said that the test-writing activities made them focus on the test rather than on the subject matter. Since the educational system in Turkey uses a "high stakes" testing approach where one test may be critical in shaping a student's future, my suspicion is that the test-writing activities had the effect of increasing their already high levels of test anxiety. Finally, the fact that bilinguals in general were less positive to learner-centered activities than the second language learners may indicate that students taking higher level courses have greater expectations of teachers as "knowers" and want them to share their expertise.

With all this in mind, we should be aware of the danger of accepting at face value teaching and testing approaches which may have worked well in some situations, but which may be alien to our particular students. Thus, I would encourage further research on factors that condition the successful implementation of student-centered approaches to teaching and testing. In our advocacy of these methods, we should be cautious about exporting them to other cultures. Perhaps we should also consider importing methods that are especially successful abroad; that is, what works best in a student's native country may be considered as a model for what is suitable and feasible for these students in their ESL classroom.

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APPENDIX

Closed-Ended Questionnaire

Directions: Circle the appropriate response for each item. "YES!" is equivalent to "strongly agree" and "NO!" to "strongly disagree:"

YES! yes? no? NO!

PART ONE

The following questions refer to your recent experience in this class of writing your own tests as a class project.

As a result of this experience...

1. I comprehended the material better than I would have in a class with teacher-prepared tests.
2. I remembered the material better than I would have in a class with teacher-prepared tests.
3. I was, on the average, less worried and anxious about taking the tests.
4. I studied less the night before the test than I would have in a class with teacher-made tests.
5. I learned a lot about writing test items.

The test writing activities...

6. were an efficient use of class time.
7. should be used for mid-terms and final exams.
8. should be used for all kinds of tests, including quizzes.

PART TWO

The following questions refer to your experience in this class in working in small groups. When I worked in my group,...

9. I learned more about the material than in a class conducted by the teacher.
10. I participated more in discussion of the material than in a class conducted by the teacher.

Open-Ended Questionnaire

Your English teacher has been experimenting with a new teaching approach using group task work. Please express your opinion about different aspects of this approach.

1. What was the subject of your group task?

2. How much did you learn in your group discussion? Did you find it beneficial?

3. If you had a choice between learning from a group discussion or listening to the teacher, which would you choose? Why?

4. How did you like the experience of writing your own test items? Did you find it beneficial?

5. When you corrected your test, did you classmate help you in understanding your mistakes?

6. How would you evaluate this teaching experiment in general?

End.